BYU honors Ryder chief

Photo by Mark Philbrick

President Thomas S. Monson, left, said M. Anthony Burns, right, is known for his humanity as well as his entrepreneurship.

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Speaking Nov. 16 to business leaders gathered for the presentation of the BYU Marriott School of Management International Executive of the Year Award, President Thomas S. Monson lauded the chairman of Ryder System, Inc., for his leadership and entrepreneurship.

M. Anthony Burns, president of the Homestead Florida Stake, received the award — established by the BYU Marriott School in 1974 to annually honor an outstanding executive from the public or private sector who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and high moral and ethical standards.

"If you read the biography of Tony Burns, you see a man who is on the move and who has been on the move since he was born in little Mesquite, Nev., just across the border from Utah," said President Monson, first counselor in the First Presidency. "I believe with all my heart that there are very few executives that are as well known for their gift to humanity and their entrepreneurship."

President Burns joined Ryder in 1974. He was elected president and chief operating officer in 1979, chief executive officer in 1983, and chairman of the board of directors in 1985. He earned a bachelor's degree from BYU and a MBA from the University of California at Berkeley.

President Monson said that in addition to his success in business, President Burns has also made time to serve others as a stake president and on the Boy Scouts of America National Executive Board.

"He teaches them about example, to be prepared and to do a good turn daily, to honor God and to obey the Scout law. He is the personification of such values; you can't teach what you aren't."

During brief remarks, President Burns said amid a changing world, bedrock values — such as character, ethics and honesty — are not changing and should not change.

"We are in a time of great change — especially in corporate America," he said. "The world, in fact, is changing more rapidly than at any other time before. . . .

"The world is a much different place than the world I looked at when I graduated from high school in Mesquite in 1960. It is a world different than what I saw when I became president of Ryder in 1979. It is even a different world than what I saw when I turned over the [position of CEO] to another gentleman just a few months ago. . . . We as individuals and executives have to adjust and work through these changes, keeping our bedrock foundation unchanged."